

for her here in DC. About 3 years ago, she met her husband Anthony at a Boy Scouts fish fry at St. Peter's Church right here on Capitol Hill. I know Johanna regards that as a blessing for her, but it was a blessing for our office, too, because we got to keep her around a little longer than she had originally anticipated. But now, in a couple of weeks, Johanna will move back to South Dakota. We are all very excited for her, but she will be sorely missed.

Madam President, I know I don't have to tell you or any other Senator here just how important the role of a scheduler is in any office. The days here on Capitol Hill are busy. Our schedulers are the ones who bring some semblance of organization to an otherwise chaotic day, making sure we get to connect with our constituents in town, make it to committee hearings and votes on time, get the briefings we need on legislation, and much more.

Johanna is not only a good scheduler, she is a great one. I will miss her patience, her professionalism, and her unparalleled ability to keep trains running on time. But what I and I think the rest of my staff will miss the most about Johanna is her kindness. Johanna has had a positive impact on pretty much every staffer who has worked with me during her time here, taking the time to get to know each of them on a personal level. Whether she is interacting with an agency head, constituent, or a fellow staffer, she is always the same—unfailingly gracious, patient, and kind.

No matter how busy or chaotic the day, Johanna can be counted on to bring a steady hand and a positive attitude. She is a woman of deep faith, and it shows. I am sad to see her go, but I want to wish her the very best of everything as she embarks on this new chapter in life.

Johanna, thank you for all your hard work on behalf of South Dakota. You will be missed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, well, we in Congress are no strangers to December funding deadlines or the occasional pre-Christmas cliffhanger.

In that respect, the situation we face now is familiar. Funding for the Federal Government is hanging in the balance. In the next few days, Congress will either succeed or fail at providing secure and stable funding for our military commanders, our Federal Depart-

ments, and key investments for our future.

Fortunately, our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and their House counterparts have been on the case. Bipartisan, bicameral committee work has full-year government funding legislation on the 1-yard line.

I am optimistic that if we can close out our other parallel business, we should be able to fund the government and move forward together.

But that brings me to the way in which this year is unlike anything we have seen before. It has been more than 9 months since our Nation began to feel the full force of the COVID-19 pandemic. The American people have done what Americans do when crises come knocking.

Essential workers have kept our Nation running. Healthcare professionals have worked day and night to care for strangers. Heroic American businesses have adapted, reinvented, and obeyed the advice of medical experts.

Now we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Operation Warp Speed has given us safe and effective vaccines in record time, but the American people need another bridge to those better days that are not so far off. The country needs Congress to come through with another targeted rescue package. They have waited months. They have waited and suffered, and some have died while needless political games have played out. The American people's wait for more emergency assistance ought to be over.

For months, I have called for a targeted, bipartisan package that would put hundreds of billions of dollars into payroll support, testing, vaccine distribution, extended unemployment aid, safe schools, and other essential priorities.

So I am encouraged that our Democratic colleagues have now embraced this framework that has been the right solution for our country all this time. And a bipartisan, bicameral agreement appears to be close at hand.

The outline that I have been discussing with the Democratic leader, Speaker PELOSI, and Leader MCCARTHY would get another huge dose of bipartisan support out the door as fast as possible.

We have yet to nail down every detail, but in broad strokes, we have been discussing the targeted second round of the job-saving Paycheck Protection Program that Republicans have sought since last summer.

We are discussing many tens of billions of dollars for distributing vaccines, COVID testing, and equipping safe schools to get our kids' educations back on track. We are discussing extending important unemployment programs.

At the particular urging of President Trump and Secretary Mnuchin, who continue to be the champions of cash relief for American families, we are discussing more direct impact payments for individuals, plus the bonus for families with children.

These are just some of the major pillars. And equally important, we are agreeing to be smart about financing these extraordinary policies.

Now listen to this. We intend to re-purpose more than \$400 billion in unspent funds which we have already allocated in the CARES Act. It turned out these funds did not need to be tapped to restore basic stability to our economy. It is time we put that money to urgent use.

Like I said at the time yesterday, I am heartened by our discussions and our progress. I believe all sides are working in good faith for our shared goal of getting an outcome.

But I will say this. In my judgment, we are very close to a point that arises in every major negotiation. It is the point where each side faces a fork in the road.

Do we want to lapse into politics as usual and let negotiations lose steam? Do we want to haggle and spar like this were an ordinary political exercise, get wrapped around the axle of language or policy riders that we know are controversial, or, on the other hand, after months of inaction, do we want to move swiftly and with unusual bipartisanship to close out our issues, seal the deal, and write text that can quickly pass into law?

In short, we are near the point in this process where we decide if we are going to stay on the fast track or drift back toward business as usual.

I say the answer should be obvious. After all these months, struggling Americans don't just need action; they need action fast—fast.

So I continue to appreciate our productive discussions, but I hope we also remember just how urgent the situation is for millions and millions of our fellow citizens.

So for the information of all Senators, we are going to stay right here—right here—until we are finished, even if that means working through the weekend, which is highly likely.

And if we need to further extend the Friday funding deadline before final legislation can pass in both Chambers, I hope we will extend it for a very, very short—short—window of time.

Our citizens can't afford for us to get bogged down in the back-and-forth. Let's finish up our bipartisan framework. Let's make law as soon as possible. That is what our people deserve.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we continue to move closer to a final

agreement on an omnibus appropriations bill and a package of emergency Federal aid to provide the country relief from the continuing impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yesterday, House and Senate leadership worked well into the night. We resumed first thing this morning. While many, if not all, of the difficult topics are behind us, a few final issues must be hammered out. We are very close to an agreement, but the details really matter. When it comes to unemployment benefits, stimulus checks, aid to small businesses, and so much else, we have a responsibility to get this right. People's lives depend upon it.

I would note that had the Republican majority joined in negotiations anytime in the last 6 months, as we had requested, we would not be in the unfortunate position of negotiating against the government funding deadline. Leader MCCONNELL kept calling for a pause, and here we are. I also note that we would have a much larger bill that met crucial needs of so many Americans if Republicans had not been so intransigent.

But we are all eager to conclude our work and deliver the relief that the American people have been waiting for. Everyone wants to see this get done, and soon. It is not an easy feat or process. We are talking about providing relief to a country that is hurting from coast to coast; a country with tens of millions of unemployed workers and more slipping into poverty every day; a country with businesses of all sizes and varieties struggling in different ways and more in danger of closing for good every week; a country that just yesterday suffered the worst day of the entire pandemic—the most cases, the most hospitalizations, the most deaths, more than 3,600 American lives.

Already, we know that the size of this emergency relief bill would be the largest stimulus in the history of our country if not for the other COVID relief bill, the CARES bill, which I negotiated with Secretary Mnuchin and we passed earlier this year.

Let me say that again. We are putting the final touches on what would be the largest stimulus in the history of the country with the exception of the CARES Act—larger even than ARRA, the stimulus bill Congress passed in the wake of the financial crisis in 2009.

None of the remaining hurdles cannot be overcome. Everyone is committed to achieving a result, and we will not leave until we get the job done.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON ATCHLEY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Atchley nomination?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 272 Ex.]

YEAS—54

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Alexander | Graham | Risch |
| Barrasso | Grassley | Roberts |
| Blackburn | Hawley | Romney |
| Blunt | Hoeven | Rounds |
| Boozman | Hyde-Smith | Rubio |
| Braun | Inhofe | Sasse |
| Burr | Johnson | Scott (FL) |
| Capito | Jones | Scott (SC) |
| Cassidy | Kelly | Shelby |
| Collins | Kennedy | Sinema |
| Cornyn | Lankford | Sullivan |
| Cotton | Lee | Tester |
| Cramer | Manchin | Thune |
| Crapo | McConnell | Tillis |
| Cruz | Moran | Toomey |
| Daines | Murkowski | Whitehouse |
| Ernst | Paul | Wicker |
| Gardner | Portman | Young |

NAYS—41

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Reed |
| Bennet | Hassan | Rosen |
| Blumenthal | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Booker | Hirono | Schatz |
| Brown | Kaine | Schumer |
| Cantwell | King | Shaheen |
| Cardin | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Carper | Leahy | Stabenow |
| Casey | Markey | Udall |
| Coons | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley | Warner |
| Duckworth | Murphy | Warren |
| Durbin | Murray | Wyden |
| Feinstein | Peters | |

NOT VOTING—5

| | | |
|---------|----------|--------|
| Enzi | Harris | Perdue |
| Fischer | Loeffler | |

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Zachary N. Somers, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United

States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Zachary N. Somers, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote or change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 273 Ex.]

YEAS—52

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Alexander | Graham | Romney |
| Barrasso | Grassley | Rounds |
| Blackburn | Hawley | Rubio |
| Blunt | Hoeven | Sasse |
| Boozman | Hyde-Smith | Scott (FL) |
| Braun | Inhofe | Scott (SC) |
| Burr | Johnson | Shelby |
| Capito | Kelly | Sinema |
| Cassidy | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Collins | Lankford | Tester |
| Cornyn | Lee | Thune |
| Cotton | McConnell | Tillis |
| Cramer | Moran | Toomey |
| Crapo | Murkowski | Whitehouse |
| Cruz | Paul | Wicker |
| Daines | Portman | Young |
| Ernst | Risch | |
| Gardner | Roberts | |

NAYS—42

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Peters |
| Bennet | Hassan | Reed |
| Blumenthal | Heinrich | Rosen |
| Booker | Hirono | Sanders |
| Brown | Kaine | Schatz |
| Cantwell | King | Schumer |
| Cardin | Klobuchar | Shaheen |
| Carper | Leahy | Smith |
| Casey | Manchin | Stabenow |
| Coons | Markey | Udall |
| Cortez Masto | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Duckworth | Merkley | Warner |
| Durbin | Murphy | Warren |
| Feinstein | Murray | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—6

| | | |
|---------|--------|----------|
| Enzi | Harris | Loeffler |
| Fischer | Jones | Perdue |

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.